

Questions and Answers for Solicitation SIZ10016R0001 Media Monitoring Services for the U.S. Embassy in Iraq

1. In the summary of objectives number (5) asks for a “description of financial responsibility as required by the SOW”. There is no reference to financial responsibility in the SOW. Can you provide additional detail as to what you are expecting here?
Financial responsibility of an offeror is requested under Section 4 EVALUATION FACTORS, paragraph (d) Responsibility Determination “Adequate Financial resources...”. For clarification, please read FAR 9.1 in its entirety with a focus on paragraph 9.104-1(a) and 9.104-3(a) that provides additional description for financial responsibility requirements.
2. For social media analytics, would the government consider getting a subscription to the analytics tool of choice? *No, the contractor will be responsible for purchasing subscriptions necessary for the performance of this contract.*
3. What type of analytics does the government specifically require in terms of social media monitoring? We have identified: volume/frequency graph, trend analysis on issues and topics of interest, engagement (retweets and likes) analysis, and influencer analysis (top 20 Twitter handles). Is the government also asking for: sentiment and perceptions of the US and US sponsored activities; message tracking; hot topics; VIP mentions, such as, Ambassadors, spokesman, etc., as defined by the U.S. Embassy Baghdad? And if so, are the additional metrics part of the daily or weekly or monthly reports?
All of those listed above are required; we also will judge proposals based on the quality of analytic reports that are submitted in the respective proposals. It is expected that these reports will be done on a weekly basis.
4. Do any of the mainstream analysis need to include full text or just link to the article online? *The question is not clear to be answered.*
5. Can the contractor be based at its home location in the U.S.? *Yes.*
*The contractor’s head office may be located in the USA (See Section 5 Representations and Certifications, FAR 52.212-3), as long as the offeror complies with the requirements of the RFP (see (q) **Other compliances**. The Contractor shall comply with all applicable Federal, State and local laws, executive orders, rules and regulations applicable to its performance under this contract.), providing uninterrupted services to the USG described in the RFP*
6. The contractor must work on public holidays? (U.S. or Iraqi holidays? *Yes. The contractor is required to comply with work schedule outlined in the RFP and DOSAR 652.237-71 OBSERVANCE OF LEGAL HOLIDAYS AND ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE (APR 2004).*
7. Roughly how many people will be receiving some/all of these reports? *Approximately 75, although numbers might change.*

8. Page 10, it is not specified when the daily tv/radio report is due? Is it a daily deliverable with a hard deadline or just FYSAs 24X7? *This report will be due at the same time as the print report.*
9. Must all of the deliverables outlined be separate or can they be weaved into one or more larger reports? For example, must the two 0700 daily clips product stay separate? Must the tv/radio report stay separate? *The reports shall be separate and in English and Arabic.*
10. Page 14, it says the contractor "through its own resources" must provide the analysis. Does that mean the contractor will not have access to any Embassy subscriptions, print papers, tools? *No, the contractor will be responsible for purchasing subscriptions and other materials necessary for the performance of this contract.*
11. Page 15, what should the contractor do when the links to articles requested in the daily briefings are blocked to readers or need subscriber access? (i.e.: WSJ, NYT) *The contractor will be responsible for purchasing subscriptions and other materials necessary for the performance of this contract.*
12. Page 15, 1B: Please be more specific on the kind of metrics you are looking for. General descriptions of the coverage or actual hard data? *See Page 15, Section 1, in its entirety.*
13. The SOW requests that an actual (1 week) sample of media monitoring and reports must be provided for the period starting from January 20th ,2016 till January 26th, 2016. Are these samples to be delivered in real-time or packaged and delivered as a section of the technical proposal on Feb. 4th? *The sample should be packaged and delivered with the technical proposal on February 18^h.*
14. We understand that monitoring of up to 25 Iraqi media outlet are required in CLIN 0002, But the SOW doesn't show the number of the US and international media outlets that need to be monitored for CLIN 0001. Will this also be defined later in consultation with the client? *Yes, this will be defined in consultation with the client.*
15. There are 15 breaking news alerts required per day in CLIN 0001 but it's not clear how many breaking news alerts required per day in CLIN 0002 (Iraqi and regional press)? *At a minimum, 15 breaking news alerts from the Iraqi and regional press would be the benchmark.*
16. Is there a minimum to the total number of topics, messages or VIP mentioned posts that we should monitor, report and analyze from Arabic social media platforms for the daily and for the weekly report? *There is no minimum, but consideration will be given to proposals that present a comprehensive framework of reporting and analysis.*
17. We believe there is a typo mistake in the pricing schedule as it shows (Price per day and number of days) in column D and E, instead of months. Otherwise, please advise! *Correct there is a typo mistake, all the prices are per month.*
18. What is the contract number(s) for the predecessor contract(s) that represent the incumbent work for this RFP? *There is no previous contract for this service.*

19. Is there an incumbent vendor currently performing these services and if so, what is the name of the incumbent vendor? *There is no previous contract for this service.*
20. What is the previous contract period of performance and contract value? *There is no previous contract for this service.*
21. What historical contract value by year? *There is no previous contract for this service.*
22. Are all existing employees full-time? *There is no previous contract for this service.*
23. How many employees currently work on the existing contract? *There is no previous contract for this service.*
24. How many employees are required to perform these services in the resulting contract? *The contractor shall determine the number of employees required to provide the service required by the U.S government*
25. Reference Section 3 – Solicitation Provisions. Volume 2: How many resumes are required with submittal and for which positions? *Please refer to Section 5, Volume 2(6) required to successfully perform under this contract. Provide a comprehensive list of experts to be employed under the ensuing contract, their resumes and place of performance, also demonstrating that the profile mix of the proposed team of experts matches with the task requirements of the SOW.*
26. Reference Section 3 – Solicitation Provisions. Volume 2: Will cover sheets, tables of contents, cross-reference tables/matrices, and acronym lists be exempt from the page restrictions? *There is no page limitation, only size limitation of 20MB per volume.*
27. Reference Section 3 – Solicitation Provisions. Volume 1 and 2: May we use a lesser font size for tables and figures as long as it is legible? *Yes you can.*
28. Reference Section 3 – Solicitation Provisions. Volume 2: Who are considered key personnel on this contract? *See RFP Schedule of supplies/Services, Block 20 Description –Specifications –Work Statement, paragraph VII KEY PERSONNEL.*
29. **Reference Section 3 – Solicitation Provisions. Volume 2:** It states that an “actual (1 week) sample of Media monitoring and reports must be provided for the period starting from January 20th, 2016 till January 26th, 2016”,
 - Must these reports be submitted to the government at the end of each day throughout the week of January 20th-26th? Or, should they be compiled and submitted as a summary with the proposal? *No, this sample report should be packaged and delivered with the final technical proposal, which is due February 18th.*
 - What is the evaluation criteria for the sample reporting? *Sample reports will be judged on their merits, to include accuracy, comprehensiveness, presentation, and quality of analysis.*
 - Is the sample expected to cover a 24/7 time period during January 20-26? What are the page limits of the reports? *There is no page limit. Reports should cover the 24/7 news cycle.*
 - Should the reports be individual documents or compiled together? *For the purpose of this exercise, they can be a single document, but should be delineated by date and product.*

- What are the font style and size requirements? *As presentation is an evaluation factor, this is up to the bidder, but we would recommend a font size that is legible to the average reader.*
 - Are the reports to be on offeror's choosing or must they be similar in scope and from the sources outlined in the solicitation? *As this exercise will be one of the criteria used to judge technical proposals, offerors shall compile a report that closely mirrors the terms of the contract and expected deliverables.*
 - Will government provide access to the media sources required for monitoring news upon contract award or is offeror to pay for the media services? *As previously noted, the contractor is responsible for any procurement of subscriptions required to fulfill the terms of the contract.*
30. Is the news and TV monitoring mainly centers on US mission in Iraq? *The question is not clear.*
31. Is the monitoring focused on Iraqi news and media or extends further to cover Arab media and social media? *Monitoring should primarily focus on Iraqi media and social media, but also should include pan-Arab media and social media.*
32. What are the main topics of interests to the mission in Iraq? *Please refer to the details explained in full in the request for proposals.*
33. Do all the reports have to be sent online by email? *Reports should be submitted digitally/electronically.*
34. Do you have a need for a 1 2 1 meetings, if so how often. *There is no need for individual meetings.*
35. On page 42 (Addendum to 52.212-1) numeral (4) indicates that "an actual (1 week) sample of Media monitoring and reports must be provided for the period starting from January 20th, 2016 till January 26th, 2016," as part of the offer. Question: What is meant by sample? Is it a sample of the offeror's current monitoring products and capabilities or a sample of the work products expected by the US Mission in Iraq, as specified in CLINs 1, 2, 3, and 4? Finally, in light of the dates set above, a response before 20 January would be much appreciated. *Please reference question 29.*
36. Is the bidding limited to US and Iraqi firms? If not, is it open to NATO or Free Trade Agreement countries? *This is Full and Open competition RFP available to all prospective offerors who comply with the requirements of the RFP and Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and Department Of State Acquisition Regulation (DOSAR), whether they provided in full text or listed as a reference in the RFP.*
37. What is the expected start date of this period of performance? *The performance period shall start from the date specified on the Notice to Proceed.*
38. (Page 42, Vol 2, section 8) The Past Performance requirement of "working experience with diplomatic issues... related to U.S. policy in Iraq" unfairly restricts competition to US Embassy media monitoring contractors in addition to a subjective definition of such a requirement. Instead of this restrictive subjective requirement, would the government let industry convey technical expertise of similar scope and complexity in Past

Performance as designed by the FAR and to allow fair competition? Experience and understanding of Iraq policy issues can be demonstrated in the Technical Volume as the appropriate volume. *The Experience and Past Performance has been replaced with following criteria*

Experience and Past Performance

List all contracts and subcontracts your company has held over the past three years for the same or similar work. Provide the following information for each contract and subcontract:

- (a) Customer's name, address, and the telephone numbers of previous contractors for whom similar insurance and services were provided;*
- (b) Contract number and type of contract;*
- (c) Date and place of performance of the contract and delivery dates and period of performance;*
- (d) Scope of the contract, i.e., types of insurance provided and range of population covered, as well as total dollar amount;*
- (e) Brief description of the performance requirements;*
- (f) Comparability to the work required under this solicitation;*
- (g) Brief discussion of any major technical problems and their resolutions.*

39. Will the Government Issue task orders on a regular basis? If so, on what basis? (i.e. monthly) If not, can the government provide any guidance as to the frequency with which orders will be placed? *See Section 1. The Schedule, paragraph II Type of Contract as well as FAR 52.216-19 ORDER LIMITATIONS and FAR 52.216-22 INDEFINITE QUANTITY. Task Orders will be issued when the services are required by the Embassy.*
- a. Reference p.34, Section c – Number of Orders is not limited by the contract. Can the government provide any guidance as to roughly how many orders it anticipates making? *See Section 1. The Schedule, paragraph II Type of Contract as well as FAR 52.216-19 ORDER LIMITATIONS and FAR 52.216-22 INDEFINITE QUANTITY.*
40. Does the government require the full text of Arabic language articles to be translated into English? *The proposal specifically calls for summaries of news stories, not full text translations.*

- b. If full text translation is required, how many articles would be potentially translated each day for the Iraq News 7:00 am deliverable? *See response to Question 40.*
41. Is there a minimum or maximum amount of news stories expected in the daily briefings? *No. This will be dependent on the news cycle and current events.*
- c. What is a current average number of news clips, should the government have a similar product in place? *Post's current internal product averages 15-20 clips per product.*
42. Does the government consider press releases or congressional testimony to be print media? *Items related to Iraq, especially USG or GOI press releases, statements, etc. are considered print media, particularly if covered by the local, pan-Arab, or international press.*
43. Regarding the briefings, how would the Embassy define "Iraq-focused" news and alerts? *Breaking news related to Iraq, to include political, economic, security, military, humanitarian, and cultural events and developments would be considered in this category.*
- d. Should any news that may not have explicit implications for Iraq still be added to the briefings? *No.*
44. Is there a performance target of deliverables per day for Arabic-language Iraq breaking news alerts? *No.*
45. Should English-language versions of Arabic broadcast stations also be used for Daily Television & Radio monitoring? For example: English and Arabic broadcasts from Al Jazeera? *No, the focus should be on Arabic-language news sources.*
46. Scope of Services, on Page 14, Section V reads, "...analysis of major news stories that includes trending, tonality, issue and message tracking." Could the Embassy define "message tracking?" Does this mean monitoring traditional and social media for messaging produced and disseminated by the PAS? *Yes.*
- e. Does the government plan to provide the Contractor with these messages as they're developed? *Yes, the government will notify the contractor.*
47. Does the Embassy have a preferred format for alerts and briefings? *No. Presentation will be one of the factors for evaluation of contract proposals and is one of the reasons why we have requested a sample product.*
- f. Examples might include .PDF, .doc, emails... *See Question 47.*
48. Will the government consider an offer from a firm with no corporate past performance but with key personnel past performance to be 'acceptable'? *Prospective offerors shall meet requirements of the RFP and Federal Acquisition Regulation and Department Of State Acquisition Regulation provided in full text or as reference in the RFP (including but not limited to: Representations and Certifications, DUNS, CAGE, and SAM registration).*

49. Please describe the format for past performance submission. *No specific format is requested by the RFP.*
50. Other than the breaking news e-mail deliverables, what format will reports be delivered? i.e. e-mail, personal briefing? *Reports will be delivered electronically/digitally. No personal briefings are required.*
51. Solicitation Pg 58 - The 'Place of Performance' gives the contractor the option to operate from Iraq, USA or both. Does the government have a requirement/preference for contractor presence in Iraq? *Place of performance is clearly described in the requirements of the RFP; see Continuation to SF-1449, Paragraph V. PERFORMANCE WORK STATEMENT.*
52. Is there a requirement to obtain any printed media in Iraq? Or can the contractor conduct all monitoring via electronic means (internet, radio, television)? *Method of collection is up to the contractor, but it should be noted that the majority of Iraqi media outlets have an online presence.*
53. For those products required on "weekends," are the weekend days Saturday and Sunday or Friday and Saturday? *Weekend is defined as Friday and Saturday in Iraq.*
54. Are "holidays" only US Federal Holidays or also local holidays observed by the US Mission? *Holidays are those days observed by the U.S. Mission and a calendar will be made available to the contractor. Also see 652.237-72, Observance of Legal Holidays and Administrative Leave (APR 2004).*
55. (Arabic Language News Alerts): Page 14- Scope indicates that Arabic Alerts are to be translated into English & Page 15 - Deliverables of 60, Section 2. a: says that the Arabic Alerts are to be summarized in English and hyperlinked to the original Arabic language original. Are the Arabic Language News Alerts to be fully translated into English or summarized with a hyperlink to the Arabic language original? *News Alerts are to be summarized with a hyperlink to the Arabic language original is preferred.*
56. (Arabic Language News Alerts): Page 15 of 60, Section 2.a: This deliverable requires that the Alerts be delivered "in near real time. What is this contract's definition of "near real time?" *Alerts should be delivered as quickly as possible after the news has been reported.*
57. Please provide a delivery schedule for the TV/Radio Monitoring Reports required on page 16 Section 4 a. *(Delivered 0700 Baghdad time 7 days a week).*
58. Please confirm that the International News Briefs are only due in the mornings 7 days a week and holidays and are not required in the afternoons and the Iraq News Briefs are due mornings 7 days a week and holidays and the afternoon Iraq News Briefs are due only 5 days a week. *That is correct.*
59. Please confirm the schedule for the Daily Social Media Report. Page 16 Section 3 (Social Media Alerts Reporting) requires the Social Media Daily report to be provided 5 days/week at 0700 hours. Page 7, CLIN 0003 requires the Daily Social Media Report to be provided at 0700 hours 7 days/week. *7 days a week is correct.*

60. Please confirm the requirements for Television & Radio Monitoring. The section is titled Television/Radio Monitoring Alerts Reporting on Page 16 Section 4. However, the specific product is titled International/Regional/Iraq, Arabic-language television news (no mention of radio) with the daily format to meet the daily International/Regional/Iraq News reports. Is there a requirement for Alerts product based on television/radio monitoring? *No, there is no requirement for television/Radio alerts. Please refer to CLIN#4*
61. Must the offeror include all four CLINs in their offer? That is, could an offeror submit a bid for only three, or two CLINs? Would such an offer be accepted? *The Embassy Requests ALL services to be provided as described in the RFP including ALL Contract Item Line Numbers described in Paragraph 2. Pricing Schedule.*
62. If related media monitoring, open-source reporting, or other relevant services or deliverables are already being provided by a bidder to the USG on another contract, can those paid-for resources be reapplied for their work on this project if that company is given the project award? If so, would those same USG owned resources/deliverables be made available to another winning bidder in the interest of fair competition? *There is no previous contract signed related to the services required in the Solicitation. All the sources required to be monitored are open-sources. In case there is any sources needs subscription it shall be the contractor responsibility to obtain access. Please read the RFP's key personnel requirements as well as paragraph VII KEY PERSONNEL and compliance with FAR 52.225-19 and DOSAR 652.228-70.*
63. Can previously produced unclassified (U or U/FOUO) media reporting developed under an older project be provided to augment our sample reports for this proposal to further demonstrate capability? *Offers will be technically evaluated based on the evaluation criteria as stated in Section 3, Solicitation Provisions, Volume 2 under A, Summary of Instructions.*
64. Please confirm: will all work and communication on the project be conducted using unclassified means and company owned/provided equipment? *Correct. There is no classified requirement in this contract.*
65. Please confirm: while our company does maintain offices in Iraq, our intent based on our understanding of the provided SOW is that project personnel would not necessarily need to be physically located in Iraq. Is that correct? *Personnel do not need to be located in Iraq.*
66. In Section V. Performance Work Statement under Scope of Services, it states that "The contractor shall have and maintain experience in providing service in this dynamic environment, utilizing an editorial judgement of what type of news story would be of interest to further the mission". Will the Government provide a set of editorial guidelines that focuses the elements of interest? *No, development of editorial guidelines is the responsibility of the offeror.*

67. In Section V. Performance Work Statement under Place of Performance, it states that, "This contract shall be performed at contractor's place of performance". Does the U.S. Government allow the physical location of the Media Monitors to be off-site to include outside of the country/region and perform their media monitoring services remotely? *The U.S government does not have any requirement for the media monitoring to be on-site. It's the contractor decision to choose the place of performance for the contract.*
68. Does the Government proscribe any social media monitoring tools such as Dataminr, Topsy, etc. and if so, will the government provide them? *No, all procurement of subscriptions and materials is the responsibility of the contractor.*
69. Will the contracted media monitors/analysts be allowed to have social media accounts? If so, will the U.S. Government provide generic accounts to keep individual analysts identity anonymous? *The USG will not set up generic accounts for the contractor's employees, as this will be the responsibility of the contractor.*
70. How will the analysts de-conflict with the Public Affairs team to prevent double reporting? *This is not a matter of concern to the offeror.*
71. In Section VII. Of the PWS, Key Personnel it identifies the Project Manager as the only Key Person. A resume for Key Personnel is not detailed in the PWS. Does the Government require a resume for Key Personnel? *Please refer to section 3, volume 2, point 6.*
72. In Section V. Performance Work Statement under "Methodology", the Government requests Morning and Afternoon International, regional and Iraq specific News Briefings.
- Are these briefings verbal or written? *Briefings are written.*
 - If verbal, is a slide presentation expected? *N/A*
 - If verbal, can it be delivered via teleconference? *N/A*
73. Regarding page 42, item (5) "Description of offeror's financial responsibility as required by the SOW," kindly provide more specific details on the information that offeror is expected to submit and please refer us to the specific page and location in the SOW where said "description" is discussed. *The contractor should read FAR 9.1 in its entirety and especially requirements of representation standards outlined in paragraph 9.104-1(a) and 9.104-3(a) that provides additional description for financial responsibility requirements (see excerpt from 9.104-3(a) Ability to obtain resources). This also refers to prompt (satisfactory) payments to any subcontractor/s whom with the contractor has been working with in the past. Or, an offeror is going to work with in the future. Also, the same responsibility is related to any of subcontractors of an offereor (see 9.104-4 Subcontractor responsibility).*
74. Please confirm that DBA Insurance will be required of the Project Manager only in the event that he/she were to deploy to Iraq. *Prospective offerors submitting their quote*

MUST meet requirements of the DBA Clause in its entirety see DOSAR 652.228-70, FAR 52.228-3 and 52.228-4 and the RFP.

75. Please confirm that only the Project Manager would be required to register in SPOT in the event that he/she were to deploy to Iraq. *No deployment is required in IRAQ*
76. Please confirm that if only *professional* TCNs are to be hired for the performance of this contract, there is no requirement to submit a Recruitment Plan. *Prospective offerors MUST comply with requirements of the RFP and the associated FAR and DOSAR clauses provided in full text or provided as a reference.*
77. It is our expert belief that to get consistent, quality, and valuable reporting that either the requirements (24/7/365) need to be reduced or the maximum dollar amount needs to be increased. We are asking for the U.S Embassy in Iraq to reconsider the limitations of the solicitation and extend the deadline? *The USG has clearly identified its requirements is the RFP.*
78. Section 3; Volume 2: (8); page 42 Will the Government please clarify the number of past performance citations are required, as well as if there is specific information required for each citation? *No. The USG will not limit any number of past citations provided by the prospective offerors. However, the USG shall consider checking of all or randomly chosen past performance references provided in the offer.*
79. Section 3 Can the Government please clarify if there are specific page count requirements or expectations for the proposal volumes/sections? *There are no specific page counts.*
80. Section 3 Can the Government please clarify if there are specific requirement regarding font size and/or type? *This question already has been answered; see Question 29.*
81. V. Performance Work Statement, Deliverable 2, parts b-e; page 15----The solicitation specifies that the various Arabic-language media products should be in English, but also expresses the need for "original article text." Please clarify if Offerors should translate full article text accompanying the executive summaries and article references in English, or if the Arabic-language full text is acceptable if accompanied by English Exec Summaries, headlines, media name, etc.? *Full Arabic text translation is not required.*
82. V. Performance Work Statement, #3; page 16----The solicitation describes "a monthly report of the top 20 Twitter accounts in Iraq." This report is not included in the pricing schedule under CLIN 0003: Social Media Alerts, Reporting. Can the Government clarify if the monthly report should be added to the price schedule and treated as a separate deliverable? *Paragraph 3 clearly identifies Social Media Alerts and Reporting and are clearly described to include tweeter; and CLIN 3 identifies social media. The monthly report is not required*
83. Section 3; Volume 2: (5); page 42----The solicitation requests a "description of offeror's financial responsibility as required by the SOW." Can the Government please clarify what information is required in this section, as well as the applicable SOW reference? *Please reference question #1.*

84. IV. Pricing, #2; page 8-----Under deliverables, CLIN 0004 "Monitoring and reporting of local/ regional/ international Arabic-language television and radio news" specifies "daily reporting format to mirror International/ Regional/ Iraq news reporting." Can the Government clarify if this should include only a daily news briefing, or if the requirement encompasses news alerts, morning news briefing, and afternoon news briefing?

Please refer to CLIN#4 No Alerts are required

85. V. Performance Work Statement, #3 (b); page 16----The solicitation describes several weekly reports for the Social Media Alerts Reporting. Can the Government please clarify how many weekly reports are desired?

Only one weekly social media report is required that includes all the required information

END